Fiscal deficit

2643. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are considering setting the fiscal deficit at 5.6% of the GDP for 2001-2002 up from 5.1% for the previous year;

(b) whether this step is being considered to accommodate demands for higher investments made by various interest groups in pre-Budget meeting; and

(c) if so, what steps are being taken to cater to this increased Government debt?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) No, Sir. In fact fiscal deficit as a proportion of gross domestic product at current prices is budgeted lower at 4.7 per cent for 2001-2002 as against a revised estimate of 5.1 per cent for 2000-2001.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

Pending income tax refund cases

2644. SHRI K.M. KHAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is enormous delay by income tax authorities in repaying the excess tax paid by the assessess;

(b) if so, the number of such cases and the period since when these cases are pending alongwith the reasons therefor;

(c) the steps taken by Government to clear such cases; and

(d) by when these cases will be cleared?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) to (d) All possible efforts are made for early and prompt disposal of refund claims. Government have consistently been impressing upon the Chief Commissioners of Income tax, the need for taking effective steps for elimination of delay in issue of income tax refunds. However, the assessing officers who process the refund claims manually, need some time to process the refund claims depending upon various factors